DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 152 174 HE 009 753

AUTHOR Sosdian, Carol P.
TITLE External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics.
INSTITUTION National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Education and Work Group.
PUB DATE Mar 78
CONTRACT 400-76-0098
NOTE 65p.; For related document see HE 009 755

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; Adult Students; Articulation (Program); Associate Degrees; Bachelors Degrees; *Employment Opportunities; *External Degree Programs; Followup Studies; Graduate Surveys; Higher Education; National Surveys; *Nontraditional Students; Part Time Students; *Program Evaluation; Questionnaires; Research Methodology; Statistical Data; *Student Characteristics
IDENTIFIERS *Education and Work; *Student Outcomes

ABSTRACT

Based on data collected for the first phase of a study conducted by the Bureau of Social Research in cooperation with the American Council on Education, this report examines the education- and work-related experiences of graduates from external degree programs at the undergraduate level to gather baseline information about how well such degrees have served their holders. Focus is on their usefulness in the world of work and the extent to which they provide access to higher-level degree programs. "External" degree programs are defined in this inventory as basically nonclassroom, nonresidential. Details concerning the procedural and conceptual decisions guiding the compilation of this inventory are included in the report. As a companion to this report, a directory of institutions surveyed, naming and describing the external degree programs they host, is being published concurrently. Findings are reported in this study regarding the emphasis within the programs, credentialing effectiveness, the consistently comparatively small enrollment, and conventional admission, grading, and examination systems. A total of 134 institutions granting associate degrees and 244 granting bachelors degrees was found. Appended are (1) sources used in developing listing of external degree programs and (2) institution survey questionnaires. (LBH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED152174

External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics

External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics
External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics
External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics
External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics
External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics
External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics
External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics

U S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HE009753

The National Institute of Education
U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Washington, D.C. 20208

EXTERNAL DEGREES: PROGRAM AND STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

By

Carol P. Sosdian

Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc.

Washington, D. C.

March, 1978

U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Joseph A. Califano, Jr., Secretary
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
Patricia Albjerg Graham, Director
Education and Work Group
Corinne H. Rieder, Associate Director

Washington, D. C. 20208

This report was funded by the National Institute of Education under Contract Number NIE-400-76-0098. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute or of any other agency of the United States Government.

CONTENTS

Foreword, by Laure M. Sharp, Eugene J. Sullivan and Robert W. Stump. v

Part I: Highlights 1

Part II: How the Study Was Conducted: Selection of Institutions, Data Collection Procedures, and Definition of Terms Used 3

Part III: External Degree Programs and Their Host Institutions. 9

Part IV: Summing Up 37

Part V: Methodology. 39

Appendix 1: Sources Used in Developing Listing of External Degree Programs. 47

Appendix 2: Institution Survey Questionnaire 51

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NUMBER		Page
1.	FINAL DISPOSITION OF INSTITUTIONS AND DIVISIONS SURVEYED	10
2.	ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF INSTITUTIONS AND DIVISIONS SURVEYED	12
3.	REGIONAL ACCREDITATION OF DIVISIONS SURVEYED AS RELATED TO FINAL DISPOSITION	12
4.	NUMBER OF DIVISIONS, EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAMS AND DEGREE PROGRAM AREAS BY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND LEVEL OF DEGREE	13
5.	DEGREE PROGRAM AREAS BY LEVEL OF STUDY	15
6.	TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AS OF SEPTEMBER, 1976, BY AREAS OF STUDY AND LEVEL OF DEGREE.	16
7.	SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CURRENT STUDENT BODY BY AREA OF STUDY AND LEVEL OF DEGREE	18
8.	TOTAL REPORTED GRADUATES FROM PROGRAM INCEPTION TO SEPTEMBER, 1976, BY AREA OF STUDY AND LEVEL OF DEGREE	20
9.	NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF GRADUATES BY YEAR AND BY LEVEL OF DEGREE	21
10.	EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM GROWTH: DEGREE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE BY YEAR FIRST OFFERED AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCUTRE OF INSTITUTION	23

LIST OF TABLES (Continued)

TABLE NUMBER		Page
11.	PROGRAM ORIENTATION TOWARDS FURTHER EDUCATION BY LEVEL OF DEGREE.....	24
12.	EDUCATION PREREQUISITE FOR ADMISSION TO DEGREE PROGRAM BY LEVEL OF DEGREE.....	26
13.	GRADING SYSTEM USED BY LEVEL OF DEGREE.....	27
14.	JOB PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE BY LEVEL OF DEGREE....	28
15.	MAXIMUM PROPORTION OF CREDIT AVAILABLE FOR PRIOR LEARNING (ALL SOURCES) BY LEVEL OF DEGREE.....	30
16.	MEAN MAXIMUM PROPORTION OF CREDIT AVAILABLE FOR PRIOR LEARNING (ALL SOURCES) BY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF INSTITUTION AND LEVEL OF DEGREE.....	31
17.	MEAN MAXIMUM PROPORTION OF CREDIT AVAILABLE FOR PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING BY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF INSTITUTION AND LEVEL OF DEGREE.....	33
18.	MEAN MAXIMUM DAYS REQUIRED OF CAMPUS-BASED STUDY BY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF INSTITUTION AND LEVEL OF DEGREE.....	35

FOREWORD

This report is based on data collected for the first phase of a study conducted by the Bureau of Social Science Research, in cooperation with the American Council on Education. Under sponsorship of the National Institute of Education, the study is examining the education- and work-related experiences of graduates from external degree programs at the undergraduate level to gather baseline information about how well such degrees have served their holders, especially with respect to their usefulness in the world of work and the extent to which they provide access to higher-level degree programs.

Preliminary to this effort, it was necessary to create a definition of "external" degree programs tailored to the purpose of this study and to identify such programs in institutions in the United States, as no currently existing typologies nor directories addressed this need specifically. For this purpose, this inventory of basically nonclassroom, nonresidential degree programs was compiled. While we made every attempt for it to be comprehensive, it was of necessity subject to certain arbitrary decisions and limitations. For interested readers, Part V (the Methodology section) and Part II of this report provide details concerning the procedural and conceptual decisions which guided the compilation of this inventory.

As a companion to this report, a directory of institutions we surveyed, naming and describing the external degree programs they host, is being published concurrently.

The survey data reported here provide a close look at one segment of the field of adult-oriented, nontraditional degree programs, namely, external degree programs. The scope of the survey was deliberately focused on this narrow objective by the sponsor of the study (NIE) to allow the researchers to zero in on this controversial segment of the "continuing education" spectrum. While this narrow focus on target programs did, in fact, enable us to document with considerable precision the range and number of external degree programs--as they satisfied our working definition of "external" as essentially nonresidential, nonclassroom--it requires us to caution the user of the data

against mistakenly assuming that we were addressing adult-oriented educational programs of far larger scope. As we examined, first, only degree-granting programs, and secondly, programs primarily nonresidential and nonclassroom in nature, we eliminated from our data collection most university or college-connected programs of continuing education and also any nontraditional degree programs which required the equivalent of a year or more of classroom instruction.

To put our target population in proper perspective, one should note that the fall, 1976 enrollment in the external degree programs (EDPs) we identified totalled slightly over 54,000, compared to over 11 million persons enrolled in U.S. postsecondary institutions in the fall of 1975. Clearly, to date, this number is a mere drop in the bucket. It may, however, signal growth in interest in such adult-oriented programs. An earlier study, focusing on a somewhat different (and smaller) group of programs, found in 1974 that 24,453 students--less than half the 1976 figure reported here--were enrolled in similar programs.

In sum, the reader is advised to note the scope and framework within which our data collection took place. Within these limits, we are confident of the reliability of the data, and feel that in proper perspective it documents well the current (1976-1977) status of available nonresidential, nonclassroom college degree programs.

Throughout the study, valuable guidance was provided by Samuel T. Phillips, formerly of the National Institute of Education and currently Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, who was the contract monitor during this phase of the project. We are also grateful to the members of our Advisory Panel for their comments and suggestions during the research. Ms. Naomi E. S. McIntosh, Pro Vice Chancellor at the British Open University; Dr. Grover Andrews, Associate Executive Secretary of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges; Dr. Sanford Elberg, Dean of the Graduate School, University of California at Berkeley; Dr. Douglas Conner, Executive Director of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers; Dr. Donald Nolan, Director of the New York Regents External Degree Program at the University of the State of New York; Mr. Hugh Wallace of

the Bureau of Recruiting and Examining at the U. S. Civil Service Commission; Dr. Herman Smith, Jr., Chancellor, University of Arkansas; and Mr. C. A. Francke, Director of Educational Systems and Program Services at the General Motors Corporation.

This report was planned and prepared by Carol P. Sosdian, project analyst, with the research assistance of Anthony Cantrick and Andrea Weckstein. As always, the patient and able support of BSSR's data processing and production units is appreciated.

Laure M. Sharp
Project Co-Director
Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc.

Eugene J. Sullivan
Project Co-Director
American Council on Education

Robert W. Stump
Project Officer
National Institute of Education

PART I

HIGHLIGHTS

This survey deals with a small segment of the academic spectrum: college programs which enable students to obtain an academic degree with minimal classroom attendance, and generous credit for prior (formal or informal) learning. Many of these external degree programs are designed for mature students, and most of them are offered by institutions which also offer more conventional programs for traditional students.

Using existing information, a total of 183 institutions (2-year colleges and universities) was identified as possible sponsors of external degree programs granting the associate or bachelor's degree. Of these, 134 qualified for inclusion in this survey and provided data for a total of 244 external degree programs, of which roughly one-quarter were at the associate level and three-quarters at the bachelor's level. Almost all of these programs were either accredited by a regional accrediting body, or had applied for accreditation.

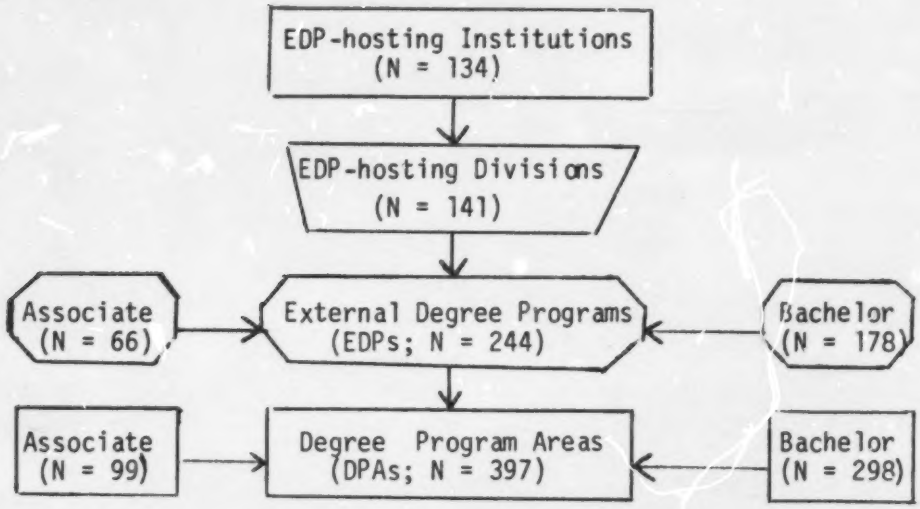
PART II

HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED: SELECTION OF INSTITUTIONS, DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES, AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

A. Selection of Institutions

Because the goal of the External Degree study was to examine the post-degree experiences of students who had participated in programs which deviated fundamentally from traditional 2 and 4-year college programs, we chose to adopt a very restrictive eligibility criterion. An institution was included only if it offered a program in which not more than 24 percent of the work required for degree completion had to be in the form of campus-based, classroom instruction. Although external degree programs have other characteristics which set them apart from traditional programs (for example a very liberal policy of awarding credit for prior learning regardless of the setting in which such learning took place), no other formal eligibility requirements were set up. (Our rationale for eligibility criteria is discussed in Part V (the Methodology section).

Candidates for the survey of institutions were identified through an extensive canvass of the existing literature including a large number of directories and college catalogs. (This search is more fully described in Part V). As will be clear from an examination of some of these definitions, a number of administrative units are discussed throughout this report. Their relationship is illustrated in the following diagram:



Earlier studies and debates have tended to focus on a few institutions and programs which have achieved high visibility: the programs in New York State (Empire State College, the New York Regents program), the Minnesota-sponsored nationwide University Without Walls, Thomas Edison College in New Jersey, programs sponsored by Oklahoma State are among the best known. Because we adopted a very stringent definition of external degree programs for this study (a definition which ruled out nontraditional programs which encourage the acquisition of work-experience and noncollege based learning, but still require considerable noncampus study), we anticipated that beyond these well-known programs our search would yield a relatively small number of institutions (probably not more thar 50 or 60) which would qualify for inclusion in the universe of external degree granting institutions. Actually, we identified initially 183 institutions as potentially eligible for participation in the study.

B. Data Collection Procedures

After the preliminary universe of institutions had been established, we sought to obtain data by a combination of mail contacts and telephone interviews.

Using all available directory information, we completed a questionnaire for each program believed to be eligible for the study, mailed the partially pre-completed forms to sponsoring institutions, and informed them that we would follow up with a telephone contact to correct these data and fill in missing information. (Detailed procedures and a copy of the questionnaire will be found in Part V and in Appendix 2.) Because of the exceptional cooperation we received from external degree granting institutions, we were able to complete the data collection process with all institutions which were contacted.

C. Definition of Terms Used

In order to insure uniform reporting from the participating institutions for the purpose of preparing this report, it was necessary to develop a set of conceptual and administrative definitions geared to the specific goals of this study. Familiarity with these definitions will greatly facilitate the reading of this report. These definitions do not necessarily coincide with dictionary definitions or definitions adopted by educational institutions, accrediting agencies, state and federal education agencies or other researchers. They were formulated for their congruence with the substantive goals and methodological requirements of the external degree study.

Definitions for the following terms are included here:

Accreditation

Affiliated Institution

Degree Program Area (DPA)

Division

External

External Degree

External Degree Program (EDP)

Free-Standing Institution

Institution

Prior Learning

Terminal Degree

Transferring Degree

Accreditation: Approval given to an educational institution acknowledging that its programs meet standards established by an association recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA)*, such as Regional Associations or Professional Association (for example, the American Medical Association or the National League for Nursing). In this report, "accreditation" is synonymous with regional accreditation unless otherwise specified.

Affiliated Institution: Institution not founded expressly for the purpose of hosting or sponsoring external degree programs. Generally speaking, such an institution is founded for educational purposes more traditional in nature.

Degree Program Area: a field of study or subject area of concentration in which one specializes while earning a degree. (Note that an external degree program might lead to external degrees in more than one degree program area, for example, an External Bachelor's degree might be awarded in Business Management, in Nursing, or Liberal Studies.)

Division: an administrative unit, usually hierarchically or organizationally below the level of university, which hosts one or more external degrees programs. Examples: College of Special Programs; Office of Extended Studies.

External: essentially, nonclassroom and non-residential. Refers here to a degree program which can be completed in the following manner: a student entering the program with the minimum entrance qualifications can complete it with less than 25 percent of the required work taking the form of campus-based, classroom instruction.

External Degree: a college level degree or diploma obtained externally. Examples: Bachelor of Professional Studies; Associate of General Studies.

* Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education, Programs/Candidates, 1977-1978, Published for Council on Postsecondary Accreditation by the American Council on Education.

External Degree Program (EDP): formalized but "external" sequence of studies leading to a particular college level degree. In descriptive terms, it is a program emphasizing minimal classroom coursework and minimal residence requirements. It generally allows considerable transfer credit for documentable learning obtained through a variety of sources (e.g., work experience, life experience, coursework taken in other institutions, in military settings, or in places of employment), and emphasized individually designed, self-directed study. Faculty contact often is only advisory in nature (rather than instructional). Instead of traditional grades award of "credit" or evaluation may be accomplished through critique of the portfolio of the student's work, through letters or reports testifying on progress by a tutor or other supervisor, through narrative evaluation of a completed project by the faculty advisor, or through tests and examination. Transcript may be entirely narrative "evaluation" with narrative sections about work completed.

Free-Standing Institution: Institution founded expressly for the purpose of hosting external degree programs.

Institution: an educational or education-related organization which has the authority to confer a college level degree upon recommendation of the faculty or relevant advisory panel of experts. It may have more than one division administering one or more separate external degree programs.

Prior Learning: External degree programs distinguish between two types of prior learning: (1) prior classroom or institution-sponsored learning, usually in the form of courses or programs completed at other institutions, including programs offered at military bases, in places of employment, in community settings, etc., and (2) prior experiential learning, which did not take place in a classroom setting and was not sponsored by an educational institution, but was acquired through work experience (including volunteer work), self-study, etc.

Both types of prior learning assessed through a program-specific evaluation system, which may include standardized examinations, the review of transcripts from other institutions, student portfolios which are reviewed by a panel of professionals, letters of evaluation from work supervisors etc. In general, EDP programs tend to place a higher restriction on the amount of credit given for prior experiential learning than for the amount of credit given for prior classroom or institution-sponsored learning.

Terminal Degree: A degree granted by a program not designed or considered by its administrators as preparation for continuing study at the next-higher academic level.

Transferring Degree: A degree granted by a program designed or considered by its administrators to provide a valid credential with which the graduate can continue academic studies at the next higher level. Applies both to Associate (i.e., transferring up to the Bachelor) level and Bachelor (i.e., transferring up to the Masters) level study.

PART III

EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAMS AND THEIR HOST INSTITUTIONS

A. Overview of the Universe

Institutions and Divisions

During the two and one-half months of data gathering, telephone interviews were initiated with 183 institutions identified through the literature as potential eligible participants.

Table 1 provides a summary of results of these telephone contacts. Despite the extensive preliminary information-gathering on candidate external degree programs, it became clear shortly after beginning the interviews that in 49 cases (27%) the institution did not qualify for inclusion. In those cases, interviews were terminated before completion and the institution was eliminated. The most common reason for disqualification was a higher requirement for on-campus classroom study than specified in the study definition of "external," which had set the upper limit at 24 percent. Of the eliminated institutions, nearly half were excluded for this reason. Interviews were completed with a total of 134 retained institutions (73%).

The 183 institutions with whom we initiated interviews contained among them 197 separate divisions hosting possible EDPs. To provide for the unexpected contingency in which opposite disposition of two divisions belonging to the same institution would occur, we shifted our unit of analysis to the division for this section of the report. In all, 141 divisions (72%) were retained for complete interviewing.

TABLE 1

FINAL DISPOSITION OF INSTITUTIONS AND DIVISIONS SURVEYED

Disposition	Institutions N	Institutions (%)	Divisions N	Divisions (%)
Eliminated				
Exceeded study criterion for campus-based, classroom study (maximum 24%).	25	(14)	31	(16)
Program discontinued	8	(4)	9	(5)
Not a degree-granting program.	5	(3)	5	(2)
Program granted only a graduate-level degree.	8	(4)	8	(4)
Program was never fully instituted	3	(2)	3	(1)
Subtotal	49	(27%)	56	(28%)
Retained for analysis.	134	(73%)	141	(72%)
Total Cases	183	(100%)	197	(100%)

The preponderance of affiliated institutions and divisions over free-standing ones as program hosts shows clearly in Table 2; 84 percent of both institutions and divisions were affiliated as against 16 percent free-standing (i.e., founded expressly for the purpose of sponsoring external degree programs.)[1]

Because of the controversial nature of nontraditional degree programs, the issue of regional accreditation is especially salient. Of the 141 divisions in the study, 120 furnished information about accreditation and 91 percent (116) were part of an institution that was regionally accredited. Almost all remaining institutions were in the process of seeking accreditation (see Table 3). Even if we assume that all divisions failing to furnish this information were not part of a regionally accredited institution, (an assumption for which in fact we have no basis), the proportion of those institutions in this study would be only 10 percent.

External Degree Programs (EDPs) and Degree Program Areas (DPAs)

Among the 141 divisions in the survey, about 20 percent of which offered degrees both at the bachelor and associate levels, we identified a total of 244 external degree programs, roughly one-quarter of which (66) are Associate level and three-quarters (178), Bachelor level programs (see Table 4). While this ratio of one Associate to three Bachelor EDPs is not an unexpected one, it was interesting to note that within free-standing divisions, the ratio grew to approximately two

[1] One of the originally-contacted free-standing institutions was eliminated because the program relevant to our study had been discontinued. Of the 183 originally contacted institutions, 87% were affiliated.

TABLE 2

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF INSTITUTIONS
AND DIVISIONS SURVEYED[a]

Administrative Structure	Institutions N	Institutions (%)	Divisions N	Divisions (%)
Free-standing.	22	(16)	22	(16)
Affiliated	112	(84)	119	(84)
Total	134	(100%)	141	(100%)

[a]Eliminated institutions and divisions not shown.

TABLE 3

REGIONAL ACCREDITATION OF HOST INSTITUTION AS REPORTED BY DIVISIONS SURVEYED

Regional Accreditation	Disposition N	Disposition (%)	Total N	Total (%)
Accredited	116	(91)	140	(91)
Formal candidate.	5	(4)	6	(4)
"Expect" candidacy[a]	6	(5)	7	(5)
Neither accredited nor candidate	1	(0)	1	(0)
Total	128[a]	(100%)	154	(100%)

N Divisions responding: 128
Base N Division: 141

[a]Informal expression by institutional spokesperson of intention to begin process to obtain formal candidacy.

TABLE 4

NUMBER OF DIVISIONS, EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAMS, AND DEGREE PROGRAM AREAS BY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND LEVEL OF DEGREE

	Administrative Structure		Total
	Free-Standing	Affiliated	
Divisions			
Offering Associate only. . .	3	11	14
(%)	(19)	(9)	(10)
Offering Bachelor only . . .	6	93	99
(%)	(37)	(74)	(70)
Offering Both.	7	21	28
	(44)	(17)	(20)
Total	16	125	141
(%)	(100)	(101)[a]	(100)
External Degree Programs			
Associate.	22	44	66
(%)	(41)	(23)	(27)
Bachelor	32	146	178
(%)	(59)	(77)	(73)
Total	54	190	244
(%)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Total Degree Program Areas			
Associate.	37	62	99
(%)	(42)	(20)	(25)
Bachelor	52	246	298
(%)	(58)	(80)	(75)
Total	89	308	397
(%)	(100)	(100)	(100)

[a]Does not total 100% due to rounding.

to three. It can be seen that free-standing divisions placed proportionately more emphasis on Associate programs than did those affiliated.

The 244 EDPs we identified offered among them 397 degree program areas of study--"DPAs"--(similar to "major" or areas of concentration) in which a student could earn a degree (Table 4).[2] The relationships seen above with regard to EDPs held for DPAs as well, i.e., there exists one Associate level DPA per 3 at the Bachelor level, but within free-standing divisions the ratio again grew to about two to three. Four study areas were predominant: General or Liberal Studies (broadly speaking, liberal arts oriented programs adapted to the needs and interests of mature adults), Applied Social Sciences, Business or Public Administration, and Individualized Studies. Program areas which might be construed as somewhat more vocational oriented appeared less likely to be available through an external degree program; only 18 engineering-related, 17 health services-related, and 21 semi-professional DPAs were identified. We also noted that the ratio of about one Associate level EDP to three Bachelor level EDPs held true for most DPAs (Table 5).

B. Characteristics of External Degree Program Students and Graduates

Enrollment.--As of September, 1976, over 54,000 students were reported enrolled in the external degree programs we contacted (Table 6). The actual enrollment is likely to be larger than indicated, because the "rolling" enrollment and attendant record-keeping systems used by many of the responding institutions either tended to underestimate the number of enrollees at the time we were interviewing, or in some cases made it impossible for the institution to give us a count of their students.

---

[2]Because the level of data available varied greatly from institution to institution, it became necessary to collect and tabulate much of our data at the Degree Program Area level to minimize loss of information.

TABLE 5

DEGREE PROGRAM AREAS BY LEVEL OF STUDY

Level of Study	Area of Study										
	Gen. Studies	Nat./ Phys. Sci.	Beh./ Soc. Sci.	Applied Social Sci.	Hum., Arts	Engi-neering	Bus. Admin.	Health Serv.	Semi Prof.	Individ-ualized	Total
Associate	17	6	6	14	6	6	19	5	6	14	99
(%)	(25)	(26)	(18)	(26)	(23)	(33)	(28)	(29)	(29)	(25)	(25)
Bachelor.	52	17	28	39	20	12	48	12	15	55	298
(%)	(75)	(74)	(82)	(74)	(77)	(67)	(72)	(71)	(71)	(75)	(75)
Total	69	23	34	53	26	18	67	17	21	69	397[a]
(%)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100).	(100)

[a]N EDPs reporting = 244

TABLE 6

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AS OF SEPTEMBER, 1976 BY AREA OF STUDY AND LEVEL OF DEGREE

Level of Degree	Area of Study											
	Gen. Studies	Nat./Phys. Sci.	Soc. Sci.	Applied Social Sci.	Hum., Arts	Engi-neering	Bus. Admin.	Health Serv.	Semi. Prof.	Individ-ualized	Not Specified	Total
Associate												
Total Students.	2,811	6	55	285	11	2,426	4,333	2,154	0	3,671	157	15,909
(%)	(19)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(15)	(92)	(35)	(54)	(0)	(35)	(2)	(29)
Bachelor												
Total Students	11,872	60	493	2,327	63	221	8,129	1,844	63	6,833	6,368	38,273
(%)	(81)	(9)	(90)	(89)	(85)	(8)	(65)	(46)	(100)	(65)	(98)	(71)
Total Students	14,683	66	548	2,612	74	2,647	12,462	3,998	63	10,504	6,525	54,182[a]
(%)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

[a]N EDPs reporting = 219
Base N EDPs = 244

At the time of our data collection, less than a third of the reported students (29%) were pursuing Associate level studies. Those who were tended to concentrate in General Studies, Engineering, Business/Public Administration, Health Services, or individualized Studies, Engineering, Business/ Public Administration, Health Services, or individualized Studies. The major areas of interest were the same at the Bachelor level, except for the addition of Applied Social Sciences and the deletion of Engineering.

Student Characteristics.--Most institutions do not keep detailed records from which exact data about the demographic characteristics of the student body can be obtained. In the interviews which we conducted with program administrators, we asked them to make an estimate about some of these characteristics, if data were not available.

Table 7 presents a profile of the external degree student as of September, 1976, based on these estimates. This "average" student was as likely to be a woman as a man, had a 20 percent chance of being nonwhite, was not likely to be unemployed (84%), and was very likely to be over 30 (68%)--definitely not the traditional or stereotypical college student.

When area of study was examined with regard to choices by each of the sexes, there was only slight evidence that women chose program areas outside the "traditional" women's fields. Women predominated in Health Services and Humanities/ Fine Arts at the Associate level, and were under-represented in Engineering and Business Administration studies.

The data suggest that nonwhite students numbered overall only about one in every five; at the Associate Level their proportion was slightly higher (26%), especially in Applied Social Sciences. These figures indicate that minority enrollments are definitely higher in EDPs than in regular, classroom-based instructional programs, although it is clear that minorities are not the prime target of these programs.

The bulk of enrolled students--84 percent, overall--were employed. No real difference in proportions employed appeared according to level of study; the only area in which fewer students seemed to be employed (76%) was individual studies.

TABLE 7

SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CURRENT STUDENT BODY BY AREA OF STUDY AND LEVEL OF DEGREE
(MEAN PROPORTION[a]; N = DEGREE PROGRAM AREAS RESPONDING)

Demographic Characteristic	Area of Study											
	Gen. Studies	Nat./ Phys. Sci.	Beh./ Soc. Sci.	Applied Social Sci.	Hum., Arts	Engi-neering	Bus. Admin.	Health Serv.	Semi. Prof.	Individ-ualized	Not Specified	Total
Proportion Female												
Associate X	41	50	10	48	73	16	40	86	-	44	59	45
(N)	(13)	(1)	(2)	(7)	(1)	(4)	(11)	(2)	(0)	(10)	(14)	(65)
Bachelor X	46	55	34	38	41	5	26	81	8	52	58	50
(N)	(37)	(2)	(6)	(14)	(3)	(2)	(20)	(6)	(3)	(47)	(106)	(246)
Total X	44	54	28	41	49	11	31	82	8	51	59	49
(N)	(50)	(3)	(8)	(21)	(4)	(6)	(31)	(8)	(3)	(57)	(120)	(311)
Proportion Non-White												
Associate X	31	33	18	33	64	25	28	4	-	24	25	26
(N)	(10)	(1)	(2)	(7)	(1)	(3)	(9)	(1)	(0)	(9)	(14)	(57)
Bachelor X	16	49	28	9	38	13	18	15	0	16	22	19
(N)	(32)	(2)	(6)	(14)	(3)	(2)	(14)	(4)	(3)	(45)	(95)	(220)
Total X	17	44	26	17	44	20	22	12	0	17	22	20
(N)	(42)	(3)	(8)	(21)	(4)	(5)	(23)	(5)	(3)	(54)	(109)	(277)
Proportion Employed												
Associate X	72	83	85	80	98	94	91	90	90	76	76	82
(N)	(12)	(1)	(2)	(7)	(1)	(2)	(14)	(2)	(1)	(10)	(14)	(68)
Bachelor X	86	98	93	88	60	98	91	93	82	76	87	85
(N)	(35)	(2)	(5)	(14)	(3)	(2)	(20)	(6)	(3)	(47)	(106)	(242)
Total X	82	93	91	85	70	95	91	92	84	76	86	84
(N)	(47)	(3)	(7)	(21)	(4)	(4)	(34)	(8)	(4)	(57)	(130)	(311)
Proportion Over 30												
Associate X	61	50	70	61	73	26	57	50	-	50	70	59
(N)	(11)	(1)	(1)	(6)	(1)	(1)	(10)	(1)	(0)	(10)	(12)	(54)
Bachelor X	75	94	67	64	69	45	78	63	90	62	71	70
(N)	(36)	(2)	(5)	(13)	(3)	(2)	(18)	(5)	(3)	(46)	(72)	(205)
Total X	71	79	68	63	70	39	70	61	90	60	71	68
(N)	(47)	(3)	(6)	(19)	(4)	(3)	(28)	(6)	(3)	(56)	(84)	(259)

[a]Mean proportions rounded to nearest whole number.

Note: Responding institutions were asked to furnish this information (based on records or on their best estimates) separately for each study area and level. Response rates varied for each item. With a total of 357 degreed program areas in the study, the total number of responses was as follows:

311 (for sex of students and proportion employed)
277 (for proportion nonwhite)
259 (for proportion over 30)

Primarily, with regard to age of students, as might have been expected more Bachelor students (70%) were over 30 than were Associate degree seekers (59%). The highest proportion of older students was found in Business Administration at the Bachelor level, where 78 percent of those enrolled were reported to be over 30 years of age. Also, typically, Health Services and Individualized Studies students were younger than average.

Degrees Granted.--Since the inception of these external degree programs, a total of 18,421 people had completed their studies and had graduated by September, 1976 (Table 8). A quarter of them (25%) received the Associate degree, and three-quarters, the Bachelor's (4,603 and 13,818, respectively). Completions were highest in General Studies, Business/Public Administration, Applied Social Sciences, and Individualized Studies; however, some areas may be underrepresented--especially at the Bachelor level--because some institutions were not able to break down their data. Of the 18,421 graduates, area of study was not reported for over 5,000.

A glance at Table 9 reveals that while external degree programs have been active for many years, the bulk of degrees were granted after September, 1975. Forty-two percent of the total pool of EDP graduates received their degree between September, 1975, and August, 1976.

One might also note by comparing Tables 6 and 8 that even though enrollments seem to be substantial, relatively few students actually have graduated over the 17-year period during which these programs became available. If enrollments remain high, and if the "maturation" effect which seems to appear in Table 9 below is real, we may expect to see more regular annual waves of EDP graduates in future years.

C. Growth of External Degree Programs

Recent growth in the area of nontraditional education is demonstrated by the figures shown in Table 10, which is based on the answers of 234 of the 244 programs in the study. Only two external degree programs existed before 1965, and only an additional 55 (24%) were implemented between 1966 and 1971. Most of the currently existing EDPs were created during the intense three-year period 1972-1974, during which the Carnegie Commission was making special con-

TABLE 8

TOTAL REPORTED GRADUATES FROM PROGRAM INCEPTION TO SEPTEMBER, 1976 BY AREA OF STUDY AND LEVEL OF DEGREE

Level of Degree	Area of Study											
	Gen. Studies	Nat./ Phys. Sci.	Beh./ Soc. Sci.	Applied Social Sci.	Hum., Arts	Engi-neering	Bus. Admin.	Health Serv.	Semi. Prof.	Individ-ualized	Not Specified	Total
Associate	2,445	1	3	210	5	66	329	249	0	1,125	170	4,603
(%)	(53)	(0)	(0)	(5)	(0)	(1)	(7)	(5)	(-)	(24)	(4)	(99)[b]
Bachelor.	3,267	7	196	630	2	9	1,085	100	3	3,464	5,055	13,818
(%)	(24)	(0)	(1)	(5)	(0)	(0)	(8)	(1)	(0)	(25)	(37)	(101)[b]
Total	5,712	8	199	840	7	75	1,414	349	3	4,589	5,225	18,421[a]
(%)	(31)	(0)	(1)	(5)	(0)	(0)	(8)	(2)	(0)	(25)	(28)	(100)

[a]N = 236 EDPs reporting.

[b]Does not total 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 9

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF GRADUATES BY YEAR AND BY LEVEL OF DEGREE

Year	Level of Degree							
	Associate		Bachelor		Total		Cumulative Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Up to September, 1972	93	(2)	728	(5)	821[a]	(4)	821	(4)
September, 1972 - August, 1973. .	810	(18)	985	(7)	1,795[b]	(10)	2,616	(14)
September, 1973 - August, 1974. .	970	(21)	2,225	(16)	3,195[c]	(17)	5,811	(31)
September, 1974 - August, 1975. .	881	(19)	3,940	(29)	4,821[d]	(26)	10,632	(57)
September, 1975 - August, 1976. .	1,849	(40)	5,940	(43)	7,789[e]	(42)	18,421	(99)
Total	4,603	(100)	13,818	(100)	18,421	(99)[f]		

[a]N reporting: 41

[b]N reporting: 76

[c]N reporting: 116

[d]N reporting: 173

[e]N reporting: 216

[f]Does not total 100% due to rounding.

tributions to the development of such programs. Growth in the number of EDPs has tapered off since 1974, with only 19 percent of the present programs founded in 1975 and 1976.[3] Table 10 also reveals the importance of the 1972-1974 period with respect to type of host institution. While affiliated institutions experienced their most active growth in EDPs during those years, free-standing institutions typically have been growing at a somewhat more constant rate.

D. Program Characteristics

"Terminal vs. "Transfer" Programs--At both degree levels, the majority of programs are designed for flexibility in the sense that graduates are given the option for further study, although the degree can also be treated as a terminal one. To obtain information on this topic the interview guide included the following question:

Is this program considered (by this institution) to be a "transferring" program (i.e., graduates will be likely to pursue further academic education), a "terminal" degree (i.e., graduates will NOT be likely to pursue further academic education), or potentially both?

As shown in Table 11, roughly three-quarters of the DPAs--for both Associates and Bachelors programs--were described as potentially both "transferring" and "terminal" in nature. An additional 22 percent of the Associate level and 16 percent of the Bachelor level DPAs are specifically "transferring," and only a very small proportion (6%) were intended to be "terminal": At the very least, these proportions are noteworthy in that, by and large, these EDPs are not perceived by their sponsors or administrators as "end of the line" programs.

---

[3]When the distribution of program implementation dates was examined year by year, the pattern shown in intervalized form in Table 9 was not different.

TABLE 10

EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM GROWTH:

DEGREE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE BY YEAR FIRST OFFERED
AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF INSTITUTION

Year First Offered	Administrative Structure		Total
	Free-Standing	Affiliated	
1960-65	0	2	2
(%)	(-)	(1)	(1)
1966-68	3	8	11
(%)	(6)	(4)	(5)
1969-71	11	33	44
(%)	(23)	(18)	(19)
1972-74	22	111	133
(%)	(46)	(60)	(57)
1975-76	12	32	44
(%)	(25)	(17)	(19)
Total	48	186	234
(%)	(100)	(100)	(101)[a]

N EDPs Responding :234
Base N EDPs: 244

[a] Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 11

PROGRAM ORIENTATION TOWARDS FURTHER EDUCATION
BY LEVEL OF DEGREE

Orientation	Level of Degree		Total
	Associate	Bachelor	
"Transferring" Program . .	22	46	68
(%)	(22)	(16)	(17)
"Terminal" Program	6	18	24
(%)	(6)	(6)	(6)
Both	71	232	303
(%)	(72)	(78)	(77)
Total	99	296	395
(%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)

N DPAs Responding: 395
Base N DPAs: 397

Entrance Requirements--One might have expected that EDPs, in their efforts to reach previously unreached clienteles, would de-emphasize entrance requirements. Table 12 demonstrates this to be somewhat less the case than expected. Of the Associate level DPAs, nearly 7 out of 10 were in programs requiring at least a high school diploma for admission; the figure was between 5 and 6 out of 10 for Bachelor areas. Eighteen percent of the Bachelor areas were in programs requiring one to two years of college as an extrance requirement; these, however, were most likely areas in EDPs designed for "junior college" graduates. However, over a quarter of the degree program areas were in EDPs which prescribed no fixed minimum level of education for admission to study. While our survey did not gather comparison data, we believe that this proportion of programs with no prescribed minimum--programs admitting on an open, case-by-case basis--is considerably higher than what would be found in the "traditional" sector.

Time Limit for Degree Completion--Generally, most programs had no time limit for completion; only 9% had any limitation at all. This held regardless of level of degree (data not shown).

Grading System--Despite efforts by EDP administrators and sponsors to develop "better" ways of evaluation than those used in the traditional sector, the A-B-C-D-F grading system (or slight variations thereof) predominates (see Tables 13). Sixty-one percent of both the Associate and Bachelor areas were in EDPs using this type of evaluation system; the remainder were divided among basically credit/no credit or individually-designed evaluation systems. We investigated the possibility that older, and hence perhaps more mature, programs would characteristically have the more traditional grading system, but found this not to be the case. (Data not shown.)

Job Placement Assistance--External degree granting institutions apparently do not emphasize the provision of job placement assistance for their graduates, although most of them have made some provisions for such services. (Table 14.) Fewer than half (41%) of the Associate level areas and less than a third (29%) of the Bachelor study areas were in programs not offering any kind of assistance, but services do not seem focussed on the EDP graduates. For roughly one-quarter of the DPAs job placement might be a matter of informal help given by a student's EDP advisor, and in about half (about a third of Associate, but slightly over half for Bachelor) only formal

TABLE 12

EDUCATION PREREQUISITE FOR ADMISSION TO DEGREE PROGRAM
BY LEVEL OF DEGREE

Prerequisite	Level of Degree		Total
	Associate	Bachelor	
High School Diploma or G.E.D.	68	163	231
(%)	(69)	(55)	(58)
College: 1 yr. or less . .	0	0	0
(%)	(-)	(-)	(-)
College: 1+ to 2 yrs . . .	0	52	52
(%)	(-)	(18)	(13)
College: 2+ to 3 yrs . . .	0	3	3
(%)	(-)	(1)	(1)
Professional License. . . .	0	3	3
(%)	(-)	(1)	(1)
No fixed minimum	31	75	106
(%)	(31)	(25)	(27)
Total	99	296	395
(%)	(100)	(100)	(100)

N DPAs Responding: 395
Base N DPAs: 397

TABLE 13

GRADING SYSTEM USED BY LEVEL OF DEGREE

Grading System	Level of Degree		Total
	Associate	Bachelor	
A, B, C scale (or variation)	61	61	61
Credit/No Credit (or variation)	20	11	13
Evaluation as determined by agreement between student and advisor. . . .	10	10	10
Other[b].	9	18	15
Total %	100	100	99[a]
(N)	(99)	(296)	(395)

N DPAs Responding: 395
Base N DPAs: 397

[a]Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

[b]e.g., summary evaluation by tutor; narrative evaluation; combination of narrative evaluation and more standardized testing.

TABLE 14

JOB PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE BY LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percent[a] Responding)

Assistance	Level of Degree		Total
	Associate	Bachelor	
None	41	29	32
Formal placement service for graduates from all programs	33	56	50
Formal placement service for graduates from non-traditional or external programs	2	1	1
Informal assistance by advisors connected with nontraditional or external programs	30	23	25
(Base N DPAs)	(99)	(298)	(397)

[a]Column percentages do not total to 100% because more than one type of placement assistance could be offered for a DPA.

placement assistance of an institution-wide nature was available to EDP graduates. Generally speaking, the message for EDP students in affiliated institutions seemed to be that they could make use of any already-existing institution placement services designed for non-EDP students; beyond that, assistance in job-seeking would have to come from their own immediate EDP mentor or advisors on an informal basis. Although the EDP clientele includes a large contingent of employment-oriented adults, this "laissez-faire" approach may be appropriate, as typically the EDP students on whom we gathered statistical information are already employed.

E. "Externalness"

As discussed in the earlier sections of this report, and explained at greater length in the Methodology section, choosing criteria of "externalness" and obtaining information about the structure of external degree programs with respect to these criteria were two of the most important goals of this survey of institutions and programs. Institutional policies with respect to credit for prior learning, credit for experiential (as opposed to classroom instruction-based) learning, and required amounts of classroom-based instruction or residential attendance were the measures chosen to assess externalness. Tables 15-18 examine the extent to which the EDPs we surveyed differed with respect to these measures of "externalness." Table 15 shows that for the DPAs for which we have information concerning the maximum proportion of credit available from all sources of prior learning, 19 percent were in EDPs which permitted the entire program--100 percent of credit--to be completed in this fashion, and an additional 56 percent were in EDPs which permitted over 70 percent.

While 35 percent of the Associate DPAs--as opposed to 13 percent of the Bachelor level DPAs--fell in the 100 percent credit-available category, the distribution for the remaining two-thirds of Associates' programs was similar to that for the Bachelor DPAs. Correspondingly, while relatively few Bachelor DPAs were in programs allowing 100 percent credit for prior learning (13%), the large majority (66%) were in programs permitting 70 percent to 99 percent. Table 16 relates these two items, level of degree and credit for prior learning, in a slightly different fashion. When all sources of credit for prior learning are considered, about two-thirds of the required study in an average Associate degreed program area, and nearly three-quarters for a given Bachelor DPA, could be completed in this manner. In examining the proportions to see if type of host institution was relevant

TABLE 15

MAXIMUM PROPORTION OF CREDIT AVAILABLE FOR PRIOR LEARNING (ALL SOURCES)
BY LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percent Responding)

Maximum Proportion Available	Level of Degree		Total
	Associate	Bachelor	
100%	35	13	19
91-99%	0	1	0
81-90%	1	14	11
71-80%	29	51	45
61-70%	8	8	8
51-60%	12	6	8
41-50%	15	4	7
40% or less	0	3	2
Total % (N)	100 (96)	100 (264)	100 (360)

N DPAs Responding: 360
Base N DPAs: 397

TABLE 16

MEAN[a] MAXIMUM PROPORTION OF CREDIT AVAILABLE FOR PRIOR LEARNING (ALL SOURCES) BY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF INSTITUTION AND LEVEL OF DEGREE

Mean Proportion	Administrative Structure		Total
	Free-Standing	Affiliated	
Associate $\bar{X}$	59	68	65
(N)	(15)	(47)	(62)
Bachelor $\bar{X}$	73	73	73
(N)	(25)	(205)	(230)
Total $\bar{X}$	68	72	71
(N)	(40)	(252)	(292)

N DPAs Responding: 292
Base (N) DPAs: (397)

[a]Rounded to nearest whole number.

no real differences appeared. The overall average percentage for free-standing institutions was 68 percent, as compared with 72 percent for those affiliated.

Although we tried to examine separately the level of permitted credit for prior learning in occupationally-oriented DPAs, lack of sufficient number of cases in several program areas prevented us from drawing firm conclusions. The trend emerged for the more occupationally-oriented areas to allow less credit for prior learning but it was not consistent for all areas (data not shown).

Table 17 addresses the core of our definition of external degrees--the proportion of credit available for experiential--as opposed to college or classroom-based--learning. It becomes clear, when we juxtapose the data in Tables 16 and 17, that while EDPs make a very generous allowance for prior learning, they are more restrictive when it comes to the type of learning for which credit is given. Credit for experiential learning was limited; overall, 40 percent of degree program work could be accepted in this form. Level of degree sought did impact on this dimension; the proportion of allowed experiential learning for Associate DPAs, was lower than that for Bachelor (25% for Associates, as compared with 44% for Bacgelors). Differences in orientation between free-standing and affiliated institutions are also demonstrated in this table. In the former institutions, over half (53%) of the required credits could be completed through experiential learning, but in the latter, less than two-fifths (38%). Associate level DPAs had less freedom in affiliated institutions than in those free-standing.

The following figures illustrate the extent to which the acceptance of experiential learning is subject to very different policies in which degree level and type of institution both play a part:

	Percent of Experiential Credit Accepted
Associate degree candidate, affiliated institution	19
Bachelor degree candidate, affiliated institution	42
Associate degree candidate, free-standing institution	43
Bachelor degree candidate, free-standing institution	59

TABLE 17

MEAN[a] MAXIMUM PROPORTION OF CREDIT AVAILABLE FOR PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING BY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF INSTITUTION AND LEVEL OF DEGREE

Mean Proportion	Administrative Structure		Total
	Free-Standing	Affiliated	
Associate $\bar{X}$	43	19	25
(N)	(15)	(46)	(61)
Bachelor $\bar{X}$	59	42	44
(N)	(25)	(183)	(208)
Total $\bar{X}$	53	38	40
(N)	(40)	(229)	(269)

N DPAs Responding: 269
Base (N) DPAs: (397)

[a]Rounded to nearest whole number.

The previously noted trend for less credit for prior learning being available in more occupationally oriented areas was more visible in this portion of the data, although the number of cases available for analysis was again quite small. Applied Social Sciences, Engineering, Business Administration, and Health Services generally permitted proportions of experiential credit below the overall mean (data not shown).

In interpreting these data, we must call attention to their limitations. Although credit for prior learning is a major policy issue, of the 397 DPAs covered in the 244 EDPs for which we collected data, only 269 provided information on this program characteristic. Respondents were occasionally not aware of the policies of their departments or, more often, because such fixed policies did not yet exist, could not supply us with these data.

The final measure in our definition of external degree programs was time required in campus-based classroom study. Table 18 demonstrates that while this time demand was indeed brief--overall, only 26 days per program were required of student--type of institution made a difference here too. Degree program areas in EDPs at free-standing institutions required generally only about 15 days per program, while the number was 28 for affiliated ones. Associate DPAs in affiliated institutions seemed to be in programs requiring the most time of all, 43 days per program, again, evidence that the Associate degree seeker in this type of institution is likely to be subjected to a comparatively heavier dose of institutional control.

TABLE 18

MEAN[a] MINIMUM DAYS REQUIRED OF CAMPUS-BASED STUDY
STUDY BY RELIGION STRUCTURE OF INSTITUTION
AND LEVEL OF DEGREE

Mean Minimum Days	Administrative Structure		Total
	Free-Standing	Affiliated	
Associate $\bar{X}$	5	43	33
(N)	(16)	(46)	(62)
Bachelor $\bar{X}$	19	25	24
(N)	(38)	(204)	(242)
Total $\bar{X}$	15	28	26
(N)	(54)	(250)	(304)

N DPAs Responding: 304
Base (N) DPAs: 397

[a]Rounded to nearest whole number.

PART IV

SUMMING UP

This study of one segment of the nontraditional sector of higher education focused on college degree programs most remote from the traditional model, those requiring a minimum of classroom-based work and allowing students to obtain college credit for knowledge acquired through a variety of experiences including work, volunteer activities, or self-structured learning. Using a self-imposed and stringent definition of externalness, we identified 134 institutions which grant two-year (Associate) and/or four-year (Bachelor) college degrees through a total of 244 external degree programs. The great majority of these programs are offered in "affiliated" institutions, i.e., colleges and universities whose primary focus is on conventional (classroom-based) programs designed for traditional students who are usually young adults willing and able to engage in reasonably continuous full-time study.

In the popular mind--and in the mind of many academic critics--external degree programs are seen as highly innovative because they move higher education and degree conferral away from traditional academic settings and standards. This survey suggests a somewhat different emphasis in the majority of programs. Rather than the development of alternative learning modes, the consolidation of fragmented, formal educational experiences is an important feature and attraction of many of these programs. External degree programs appear to be a source of ultimate credentialling for employed adults of both sexes who have acquired a variety of academic credits in several academic institutions, usually sequentially and as a by-product of geographic mobility (especially in the case of persons previously in the armed forces).

Many of the other findings of the survey were equally unexpected. The total number of students enrolled in these programs is quite small when compared with the number enrolled in traditional programs. The total number of graduates to date reflects this consistently comparatively small enrollment. It seems that the growth rate of these programs has already peaked;

EDPs grew in numbers most rapidly in the early 70's, and the number of new programs seems to have tapered off in subsequent years. Relatively few of these programs are giving academic credentials and academic recognition to areas of study essentially vocational in nature; on the contrary, they are concentrated in traditional professional fields (such as business administration, counselling, and nursing, to name a few). Finally, EDPs were found to have fairly conventional admission, grading and examination systems. With only a few exceptions the programs are being offered by accredited institutions or have obtained regional accreditation on their own.

From all indications, it seems likely that the most important changes one might anticipate is not so much the further numerical growth of these programs--although enrollments are likely to go up over time, as more and more adults become aware of these academic opportunities--as their internal growth or development. The battle to establish external degree programs as a useful and valuable educational system alternative was fought and to a large extent was won in the early years of this decade. As these programs become more accepted and more mature, concerns about quality, credibility, curriculum development, or improvements in assessing and documenting learning are becoming more salient.

However external degree programs may grow, a realistic evaluation of this alternative and a better perspective upon the role of these programs in the world of education must await the availability of data regarding their less visible, less controversial, but far more populous educational counterparts--part-time and extension programs, particularly those sponsored by junior and community colleges and by some four-year colleges and universities. Far more students are enrolled in and have graduated from these more conventional but still nontraditional degree programs; moreover, over time, the differences between such programs and the external degree programs which we studied are likely to diminish. Since part-time or extension study degree programs are not given the "external" label, to date they have not been challenged as have been the external degree programs we surveyed. It would seem that a realistic and full assessment of available educational alternatives for adults wishing to obtain quality education and useful credentials requires a systematic look at this uncharted territory.

PART V

METHODOLOGY

A. Development of Definitions

"External," "External Degree," and Externalness.--The first step in the study was deciding how to define "external" and "external degree": would our research profit most from adopting a definition and conceptual approach already established by one of the known researchers in this field (e.g., Houle, Valley, Medsker), from synthesizing the major typologies into one more appropriate to our needs, or from attempting to distill whatever it might be that distinguishes "external" degrees from others?

As we examined the major typologies and related literature on EDPs, the lack of agreement about what is meant by "external", "extended," and "nontraditional" became quite clear. While each scheme ordered the various external/extended/nontraditional degree programs in a descriptive, logical fishion, categories were not without overlap. Houle suggested three major groupings of external degrees (the extension degree, the adult degree, and the assessment degree) and conceived of the "external degree" as one which is "based on a conception of the needs of its clients." Because of the difficulties of developing a clear-cut definition, he also suggested a simpler approach, defining the EDP as one that "is not an internal degree."[4]

The six models of external degrees suggested by Valley (administrative validation, modes-of-learning, examination, validation, credits, and complex systems)[5] again provided a descriptively logical picture of these degree programs, but it focused essentially on types of nontraditional mechanisms, rather than the characteristics of "externalness."

---

[4]Houle, Cyril, The External Degree, Jossey-Bass, 1974, 14-15.

[5]From Gould and Cross, Explorations in Nontraditional Study, Jossey Bass, 1972, 97-124.

Medsker, et al. developed a more comprehensive scheme by combining "nontraditional" and "external" into one definition of "extended":

> a degree program with policies and procedures which enhance its convenience and appeal and with content of interest to students who are usually beyond what has been considered the conventional college age.[6]

While all these typologies place some conceptual order around the wide range of nontraditional degree programs during their period of most rapid growth (1972-1974), they were not sharp enough to serve our definitional and research needs. The only one which touched on some of our concerns with identifying "externalness" was developed in late 1975 by the Educational Testing Service and the College Entrance Examination Board. In dividing nontraditional degree programs into two main categories, instructional and validation, it pointed to a natural separation between programs whose function primarily is to recognize learning through award of an appropriate degree, as opposed to programs whose function primarily is to educate, and only secondarily to award a degree. This approach suggested to us that we might be able to identify variables which would mirror the range of nontraditional degree programs but would at the same time provide some quantitative handle on "externalness." Careful review of program characteristics yielded two which seemed to discriminate among programs on the instructional vs. validation dimensions: (1) amount of credit towards completing the degree programs which could be awarded through prior learning, and (2) the amount of time a student would be required to spend in campus based, classroom instruction. To enable more refined treatment of credit for prior learning, this item was subdivided into two categories: credit for learning obtained from academic work at other institutions and credit for learning obtained in nonacademic settings, through work or life experience. We decided that, for definitional purposes,

---

[6]Medsker, et al. Extending Opportunities for a College Degree. Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, 1975, vii.

degree programs which were the most "external" would be characterized by having high amounts of possible credit for prior learning, especially of a nonacademic nature, and low amounts of required campus, classroom study.

As we began our inventory of institutions and programs, it became immediately clear that we needed to establish some sort of a priori "cut-off" policy to regulate inclusion of a degree program in the inventory. We set this cut-off at 25 percent: a degree program which required that 25 percent or more of degree-related work had to be performed through campus-based, classroom work was ruled ineligible for our study. This proportion was selected specifically to disqualify the many one-year residential degree programs, as they did not fit with our emphasis on nonclassroom, nonresidential learning. In instances in which we did not have enough information about the degree program to make the inclusion decision certain, further probing was done during the interview until it became evident that the program was indeed out-of-range.

In contrast to our procedure with regard to required campus based classrom study, while the variable credit for prior learning (CPL) was central to our study definition of "externalness," a priori screening for inclusion along this variable was not conducted because there were no already-existing benchmarks against which we could set a reasonable cut-off. The extent to which the programs which survived our campus-based, classroom study cut-off were finally seen to be similar with regard to CPL is shown in Tables 15-17.

From this discussion, it is clear that our definition of externalness tends to emphasize validation over instruction or education. Practically all programs which emphasize validation through examination or evaluation of prior learning are included in our universe of external degrees; programs which emphasize nontraditional education, including many highly innovative ones--but which require more than minimum of classroom attendance and/or academically-based or supervised learning are likely to be excluded. It must be understood that our search for a universe of heavily "validation-oriented" programs was a deliberate one, since the objective of the study was in large part to measure the usefulness of degrees which represent the most radical departure from the traditional college degree.

Degree Programs and Degree Program Areas.--A comment about our definition of "degree program" is also in order. We elected to consider a degree program to be a given sequence of studies leading to the conferrring of a specific degree, rather than adopting a "system" approach as was done in the Medsker study (supra). Our more narrow definition allowed us to preserve what we saw as essential differentiations among external degree programs offered at times by different departments or schools within the same institution.

In line with the above, the term "degree program area" evolved to satisfy our research needs for occupationally-relevant data. It was desirable from our perspective to know what number of degree programs offered study in, for example, business or public administration or nursing; how many students were enrolled in those courses of study, how many degrees had been granted, and so on. Since most degree programs we surveyed offered study in more than one area, simply to have obtained gross figures for an entire EDP would have defeated our efforts towards documenting occupationally relevant areas of interest for this particular clientele.

"Free-standing" vs. "Affiliated."--The distinction between "free-standing" and "affiliated" institutions arose from our search for developing some comparative data for external degree holders with graduates of regular or "internal" degree programs. Although at one time we entertained the possibility of using traditional evening or extension students for purposes of this comparison, it became apparent during the institution survey that sources of eligible comparison populations were severely limited.

Comparing degree holders from affiliated and free-standing institutions will achieve some of the most important purposes for which the study was designed. By comparing EDP graduates of free-standing institutions with those from affiliated ones, perhaps the most important comparison element should be captured; the so-called "halo effect" from which graduates of affiliated institutions might benefit, as their degree was awarded by an institution familiar to admissions officers and employers. Again, we recognize that these design decisions are most appropriate for the analysis of validation--rather than education--effects of these programs.

B. Development of the List of Institutions and Programs

A necessary outcome of our decision to focus on nonresidential, nonclassroom degree programs was a comprehensive search through many directories and catalogs of nontraditional degree programs to identify those which would satisfy our inclusion criteria. We reviewed publications covering programs directed to military personnel, proprietary programs, and correspondence degree programs as well as those more typical and usually sponsored by not-for-profit colleges or universities.

As might be expected, certain sources were of greater help than others. All of the institutions listed in the following publications were included initially in our universe: DANTES Guide, the Education Development Center's List of Institutional Contacts, Medsker's Extending Opportunities, the National Drug Abuse Career Development Center's Directory, Trivett's Academic Credit, and the Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities' Listing (see Appendix 1 for full titles).

Bear's Comprehensive Guide contained two chapters (#4 and 5) listing programs which, because of their already documented limited residency requirements, we automatically drew into our initial universe. Other chapters listed programs which were characterized either by "Alternatively-scheduled options" or reduced-residency-requirement programs but which still required enough classroom instruction to exclude them from our study.

In Blaze, et al.'s Guide, institutions which appeared in the chapter "External Degree Programs--UWW's" were included in our initial universe, as well as some programs from the other sections of the Guide selected according to the information on the program given in that text.

Gordon and Schub's On-Campus/Off-Campus contained four chapters listing institutions offering an array of alternative degree programs. The first three chapters were assumed into our initial universe, as nearly all programs in those chapters had little if any residency or classroom instruction requirement. The fourth chapter ("Local Degree Programs") listed over 2,000 institutions--many junior or community colleges--which were described as hosting programs which required "regular campus contact" (although it was not specified how much) and/or class attendance. As no other information about

individual programs was given, and the number of programs was quite large, this chapter was not combed for inclusions. It is therefore possible that a few programs qualifying as "external" by our definition were omitted in this process.

The first chapter of Valley's Increasing the Options listed 28 new degree programs (as of 1972), many of which qualified for inclusion in the survey. The other chapters of this publication were not relevant to the task at hand.

Extended Degree Programs in the West, produced by the Western Interstante Commission for Higher Education, was an extensive listing of extended learning opportunities in the 13 WICHE states. By the time we received this publication, BSSR had already identified many of the programs on which WICHE reported, and therefore used this publication to confirm some of our inclusions and to supplement our list.

The National University Extension Association's Guide to Independent Study, the materials from Servicemen's Opportunity Colleges, Trivett's Proprietary Schools, Valley's Inventory, and the National Association of Trade and Technical School's Directory were all examined for possible degree programs to include. Most programs covered in these sources either were not Associate or Bachelor level degree-conferring programs, or required substantial amounts of classroom instruction.

Two publications came to our attention too late in the survey to be searched for programs to include: Munzert's National Directory and Chronicle Guidance Publications' Guide. However, we noted through inspection of these two directories that we had already covered most of their listings.

BSSR engaged the Independent Study Division of the National University Extension Association to survey its Division members to ascertain how many offered degree programs which could be completed solely through correspondence courses. Through this effort, we identified five institutions offering such programs; according to our documention, at present these are most likely the only such programs available.

A detailed listing of all publications used will be found in Appendix 1.

C. Procedures Followed During Data-Gathering

Once the specific program characteristics of interest to the institution survey were decided, the instrument was drafted and pretested with ten institutions which were intentionally selected to be test "problem cases." Only minor revisions were necessary, and we proceeded with the survey plans. (For a copy of the final instrument, see Appendix 2.)

The survey was a combination effort of mail-out and telephone contact. The instrument itself, along with a letter of introduction and explanation, was mailed to each universe institution or division, and was followed about ten days later by a telephone call from a project assistant who completed the survey form over the phone. This procedure was adopted in hopes of minimizing labor on the part of the respondent and securing prompt and accurate information. Unfortunately, despite repeated mail-outs (to replace "lost" forms) and repeated telephone appointments, chronic nonrespondents remained. We had anticipated a mixiumum of thirty minutes per interview, to be completed during one interview, but found ourselves making on the average nine appointments with each division/institution in order to complete taking down all available information. Similarly, the minutes spent in telephone conversations with each of the 197 divisions we contacted (see table below) and staff time to pursue these interviews to completion expanded quite beyond our earlier estimates.

Whenever possible, we attempted to maintain contacts with one spokesperson for each institution/division.

Data were prepared for analysis in accordance with BSSR data processing procedures, and were analyzed through SPSS-package programs.

LENGTH OF TELEPHONE INTERVIEW (IN MINUTES) WITH DIVISION AS RELATED TO FINAL DISPOSITION OF DIVISION

Length of Interview	Disposition					
	Eliminated		Retained		Total	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
15 minutes or less	33	(59)	29	(21)	62	(31)
16 - 30 minutes	16	(29)	56	(39)	72)	(37)
31 - 45 minutes	4	(7)	32	(23)	36	(18)
46 - 60 minutes	1	(2)	6	(4)	7	(4)
Over 60 minutes	2	(3)	18	(13)	20	(10)
Total	56	(100)	141	(100)	197	(100)

APPENDIX 1

SOURCES USED IN DEVELOPING LISTING OF
EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

USED

Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education and Programs, Candidates, 1975-1976. Published for Council on Postsecondary Accreditation by the American Council on Education. Washington, D. C. 1975.

Bear, John. A Comprehensive Guide to Alternative Degree Programs. Rafton & Bear. Drawer H, Little River, California 95456. 1976.

Blaze, Wayne; Hertzberg, Bill; Krantz, Roy; and Lehrke, Al. Guide to Alternative Colleges and Universities. Beacon Press. Boston. 1974.

Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support. Independent Study Catalog Guide to External Degree Programs: DOD 1322.8-C, Vol 1; Section 5. Department of Defense. Pensacola, Florida. June, 1976.

Directory of Accredited Institutions, 1975-1976. The Accrediting Commission of the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools. Washington, D. C. September, 1975.

Directory of Accredited Private Trade and Technical Schools, 1975-1976. The National Association of Trade and Technical Schools. Washington, D. C.

Education Development Center. List of Institutional Contacts for External Degree Possibilities in the U. S. 55 Chapel Street, Newton, Massachusetts. August, 1976.

Engdahl, Lilla E. and Shay, Thomas M. Extended Degree Programs in the West: Report of a Survey. Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. Boulder, Colorado. June, 1976.

Gordon, Linda W., and Schub, Judy H. On-Campus/Off-Campus Degree Programs for Part-Time Students. National University Extension Association. Washington, D. C. 1976.

Guide to Independent Study Through Correspondence Instruction 1975-1977. National University Extension Association. Washington, D. C. 1975.

Medsker, Leland; Edelstein, Stewart; Kreplin, Hannah; Ruyle, Janet; Shea, John. Extending Opportunities for a College Degree: Practices, Problems and Potentials. Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California. Berkeley. 1975.

National Drug Abuse Career Development Center, Center for Human Services. Directory of External-Degree and Other Nontraditional Programs. 5530 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. Washington, D. C. January, 1976.

Servicemen's Opportunity Colleges. Catalog and materials received from Frances C. Lapinski. American Association of State Colleges and Universities. One Dupont Circle, Washington, D. C. April, 1976.

Trivett, David A. Academic Credit for Prior Off-Campus Learning. ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 2. American Association for Higher Education. Washington, D. C. 1975.

Trivett, David A. Proprietary Schools and Postsecondary Education. ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 2. American Association for Higher Education. Washington, D. C. 1974.

University Without Walls: listing for participating institutions, received from Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities. 930 Corry Street, Yellow Springs, Ohio. April, 1976.

Valley, John R. An Inventory of External Degree Programs and Proposals (and) A Supplement to an Inventory of External Degree Programs and Proposals. Educational Testing Service. Princeton, New Jersey. 1971.

Valley, John R. Increasing the Options. Recent Developments in College and University Degree Programs. Educational Testing Service. Princeton, New Jersey, 1972.

OBTAINED TOO LATE TO VERIFY COVERAGE

Munzert, Alfred W. National Directory of External Degree Programs. Hemisphere Publications. Machias, New York. 1976.

Guide to External and Continuing Education. Chronicle Guidance Publications. Inc. Moravia, New York. 1976.

APPENDIX 2

INSTITUTION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Card

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

AREA CODE & TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PROGRAM: ☐☐☐ (AC) ☐☐☐ (EXCH) ☐☐☐☐ 1-10

NAME OF RESPONDENT: _____

INSTITUTION ID#: ___ ___ ___ 11-13

DIVISION ID #: ___ 14

PROGRAM ID #: ___ ___ 15-16

Program Information

THIS PROGRAM: _____ ☐☐☐ 17-19

1. In what calendar year was this program first offered? . . . . 19 ____. 20-21/99

2. How many students (including both full-time and part-time) are currently enrolled in this program?

_____. 22-25/9S

3. Approximately what proportion of this program's current students: (IF A PRECISE ANSWER IS NOT AVAILABLE, YOUR "BEST GUESS" WILL BE FINE)

a. Hold GED's? . . . . . ____% 26-27/99
b. Graduated from a nonacademic high school program? . ____% 28-29/99
c. Are female? . . . . . ____% 30-31/99
d. Are nonwhite? . . . . . ____% 32-33/99
e. Are employed? . . . . . ____% 34-35/99
f. Are over 30?. . . . . ____% 36-37/99

4. For each year ("year" = September to August) since this program first began to operate, how many degrees have been granted?

	# Degrees Granted	
a. September 1975-August 1976 . . .	_____	38-41/9S
b. September 1974-August 1975 . . .	_____	42-45/9S
c. September 1973-August 1974 . . .	_____	46-49/9S
d. September 1972-August 1973 . . .	_____	50-53/9S
e. Before September 1972.	_____	54-57/9S
TOTAL:	_____	58-61/9S

5. How is this program approved or accredited? (Circle all that apply.)

a. Approved or authorized by State Legislature 1 62/2
b. Approved or authorized by State Board of Higher Education 1 63/2
c. Accredited by Regional Association. 1 64/2
d. Formal Candidate for Accreditation by Regional Association 1 65/2
e. Not yet accredited nor formal Candidate for Accreditation by Regional Association, but expect to be in the forseeable future 1 66/2
f. Approved or authorized by some group or body not listed above. 1 67/2

Card ___

6. How long does a student have to complete this program? (If there is no time limit, please answer "0.")

_____ Months 68-70/99

7. Is this program considered (by this institution) to be a "transferring" program (i.e., graduates will be likely to pursue further academic education), a "terminal" degree (i.e., graduates will NOT be likely to pursue further academic education), or potentially both?

79-80/__

Card ___

"Transferring" 1
"Terminal" 2
Potentially both 3 20/4

8. Approximately what proportion of this program's graduates DO go on to further academic programs?

About _____% 21-22/99

9. What is the level of education REQUIRED to qualify for admission to this program?

High School Diploma or GED 1
1 year or less of college. 2
1+ to 2 years of college 3
No fixed minimum requirement 4 23/5

10. Is it possible to complete this program SOLELY through credit for prior learning (obtained through any or all sources of learning) as assessed and evaluated by examinations, review panels, etc.?

No (ANSWER Q. 11 and Q. 12). 1
Yes (GO TO Q. 13). 2 24/3

11. (IF "NO") OF THE TOTAL "CREDIT" OR WORK REQUIRED TO RECEIVE THIS EXTERNAL DEGREE:

a. what is the MAXIMUM proportion which it is POSSIBLE to obtain through award of credit for prior learning obtained through any or all sources of learning (including transfer college course credits, credit-by-exam, etc.)?

About _____% 25-26/99

b. what is the MAXIMUM proportion which it is POSSIBLE to obtain through award of credit for exclusively prior experiential learning (noncollege work and/or life experience)?

About _____% 27-28/99

Card ___

12. AFTER ADMISSION, OF THE TOTAL "CREDIT" OR WORK REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THIS PROGRAM:

a. What is the MINIMUM number of days a student MUST be physically ON CAMPUS for on campus classroom courses, seminars, weekend courses, summer seminars, etc.?

About _____ days 29-30/99

b. What NUMBER of on-campus "Courses" or "Seminars" does this figure (12a) represent?

_____ "Courses" or "Seminars" 31-32/99

13. FOR STUDIES ORIGINATING AND FINISHED THROUGH THIS PROGRAM AT THIS INSTITUTION: What is the predominant "grading" system?

A, B, C, D, F or other variation of scale utilizing A, B, C 1

Pass/Fail, Credit/No Credit, or other variation of this scale 2

There is no predominant "grading" system: type of evaluation varies according to agreement between student and advisor/ mentor/instructor 3

Other (describe: _____

_____

_____) 4 33/5

14. Is any active job placement assistance, either formal or informal in nature, available to this program's graduates?

Yes (GO TO Q. 15) 1

No (GO TO Q. 16) 2 34/3

15. Which of the following kinds of active placement assistance are there? (Circle all that apply.)

a. Institution-sponsored, formal placement service for graduates from all programs. 1 35/2

b. Formal placement service oriented especially for graduates from this program. 1 36/2

c. Informal assistance obtained through active faculty/mentors connected with this program. 1 37/2

d. Other type of assistance (describe: _____

_____). 1 38/2

16. Was this program developed primarily to supply a particular employer with graduates with certain skills?

Yes (GO TO Q. 17) 1

No (GO TO Q. 18) 2 39/3

IF YES:

17. Which employer?

Name: _____

Location: _____

Type of Business: _____

Card ____

18. Which of the following offices would have the names and addresses of this program's graduates? (Circle all that apply.)

a. Office of the Director of this program.	1	40/2
b. Alumni Office.	1	41/2
c. Registrar.	1	42/2
d. Other (Who? _____) .	1	43/2

19. Has this institution or program office ever surveyed this program's graduates to inquire about their post-degree experiences in work or in pursuing further education?

Yes (GO TO Q. 20). 1
No (GO TO Q. 21) 2 44/3

20. Please indicate one answer for each of the following:

	Yes	No	Does Not Apply	
a. Students who graduated Sept. 1975 or after were surveyed	1	2	3	45/4
b. Students who graduated Sept. 1974 - Aug. 1975 were surveyed.	1	2	3	46/4
c. Students who graduated Sept. 1973 - Aug. 1974 were surveyed.	1	2	3	47/4
d. Students who graduated Sept. 1972 - Aug. 1973 were surveyed.	1	2	3	48/4
e. Studsnts who graduated before Sept. 1972 were surveyed	1	2	3	49/4

21. Does this institution offer a(n) (Bachelor's)/(Associate) degree program in (Area: _____) in an ON-CAMPUS format, and which is especially designed for working adults?

Yes (GO TO Q. 22) 1
Don't Know (GO TO Q. 22). 2
No (THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP. THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS COMPLETED). 3 50/4

22. Who can we contact for more information?

Name: _____
Title: _____
Phone: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

For Office Use Only: __ __ __ __ __ __ 51-56/95

♦

79-80/___

*U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1978 O-721-251/292